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NEWSLETTER: APRIL/MAY 1995

On MAY 8, our next Film Night offers a feast of music and drama.

SUPPORT: "A TRIBUTE TO THOSE GLORIOUS BLACK & WHITE MGM MUSICALS"
As the title suggests, a hugely entertaining pot pourri of some of the finest musical moments from MGM, among them THE BROADWAY MELODY OF 1938, DANCING LADY, THE MERRY WIDOW, A NIGHT AT THE OPERA, NAUGHTY MARIETTA, GIRL CRAZY, CABIN IN THE SKY, THE BIG STORE, STRIKE UP THE BAND and ROSALIE excerpts, from artists including Eleanor Powell, George Murphy, Fred Astaire, Maurice Chevalier, Shirley Temple, Jeanette McDonald, Sophie Tucker, Buddy Ebsen, Judy Garland, Joan Crawford, Al Jolson, Nelson Eddy, Alan Jones, Kitty Carlisle, the Marx Brothers, Ethel Waters, Mickey Rooney and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra.

Memorable stuff - and our thanks and congratulations to member Mario Zanatta, who has done such a fine job of compilation with this, and other similar tapes to be seen in the future.

MAIN FEATURE: "LITTLE BOY LOST" Paramount. Produced in Hollywood and in and around Paris from September 1952 to February 1953. (Released 1953).
Screenplay and direction by George Seaton - production by Seaton and William Perlberg.
The story was adapted from the book of the same name by Margharita Laski, who originally sold the film rights to English actor/producer John Mills. After their re-sale to Paramount, she was very concerned that the character she created as an unhappy British intellectual was to be changed to a "singing American." But after seeing the movie, she agreed that the "singing American" had done an admirable job in a demanding role.

As most Crosby fans have heard, Bing was a reluctant participant in the French location shooting, as it was then known that wife Dixie was dying, and he wanted to stay with her. The argument that persuaded him to go was that if he didn't, Dixie would realize that her condition was more serious than she had been told.
However after his return to the U.S., and Dixie's death, some of the Paris filming had to be re-done - a fair indication that the star's heart wasn't in it first time around, and that it would have been more economical for Paramount to postpone the original shoot.

A dramatic and touching story begins in Paris in 1938 when radio newscaster Bill Wainwright (Bing) is covering the story of Nazi military emergence. He meets and marries French singer Lisa Garret (Nicole Maurey in her American film debut), but war separates them when, soon after the birth of their son, he is wounded on assignment and taken to England - then denied re-entry to France after Germany's invasion. Lisa, working for the Resistance, is executed and all trace of the baby lost. Bill returns to France in 1944 and with the help of his friend Pierre played by celebrated French actor Claude Dauphin, follows countless leads without success. Finally, In 1948, new hope is raised when a frail and melancholy

little boy in a French orphanage seems to fit the history of the missing "Johnny." However heart-breaking setbacks are to be encountered before it can be established whether or not this is indeed the "little boy lost."

The music fits the mood of the story beautifully. Overall score is by Victor Young, and among songs are three specially-crafted by Johnny Burke and James van Heusen - "A PROPOS DE RIEN" (Apropos of Nothing), "THE MAGIC WINDOW," and "CELA M'EST EGAL" (It's All the Same to Me.) Also featured are traditional French favourites "SUR LE PONT D'AVIGNON," and"FRERE JACQUES" - plus "THE DARKTOWN STRUTTERS BALL" - and Stephen Foster's "OH SUSANNA."

USUAL REMINDERS ..... Start at 7.15 p.m. sharp, at the GRIERSON THEATRE, approached from the back entrance off Treasury Place, City - where a private free car park is available. And as usual, it would be much appreciated if exact money could be proffered at the door.

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REMAINING FILM DATES FOR THE YEAR ....*June 19 (*Look forward to a Christmas
August 14 (celebration in its correct
October 9 (seasonal setting - Winter!
December 4 (A very special movie (no,not
("White Christmas") - and Christmas
(cake for supper. More later!

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NEW MEMBERS. A warm welcome to BRIAN & LIBBY FULLER (Blackburn) - ERIC ELDER (Bundoora) and STAN FISHLEY (Monbulk.)

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FOR CROSBY COLLECTORS
MIKE KAPIANIS, of 64 KINGSLEY DRIVE, YONKERS, NEW YORK, U.S.A. 10710, SENDS THE FOLLOWING ADVICE RE DISPOSAL OF HIS CROSBY COLLECTION.

FOR SALE - Inquiries, General or Specific want list welcome.

DISPOSING OF COMPLETE BING CROSBY COLLECTION consisting of 812 plus 78s, including BRUN, VIC, Potato Head and Black Col, Decca U.S. and Foreign issues, 10" and 12" Lps, V-Disks, 12" and 16" Transcriptions, Test Pressings. Also Hard Cover books, Sheet Music. Some of the rarer items include Bing's first record "I've got the Girl" with Don Clark orch. COL 824, ENG. Parlophone 331 "Let's Fall in Love", French Parlophone 22413 "My Kinda Love" with Dorsey Bros. (Not listed in Mellos book or Rusts Entertainment Discog.) OK 41181 "Spell of the Blues" 12" ENG. BR. 0134 "Pennies From Heaven", BR. 20109 "Lawd you Made----- BR. 20105 St. Louis BL. VIC 36186 "B" master "High Water" various labels such as India Col. British Rex, Argentine Odeon, Crosby pic labels on Belgian Deccas, the very rare two Italian Columbias (From BRUN) 16" Transcriptions Paramount Trailers from the films "Double or Nothing", Waikiki Wedding", "Rhythm on the River", "Paris Honeymoon. The collection generally covers the years 1926-42. No 45s, Cds, or cassettes. Serious inquiries welcome. Will consider selling the collection in parts.

While in ENGLAND, Derek Parkes' "THE CROSBY COLLECTOR" club has over 100 CD's available. i.e. stocks of over 100 different releases. If interested, Bob Neate has the full list, together with price and ordering details.

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Thankfully, in recent weeks, there seems to have been a resurgence of media interest in Bing.

However the general reaction to ABC/TV's presentation of "BING CROSBY - HIS LEGENDARY YEARS" was one of slight disappointment. To many people, it seemed to be a rather lightweight production, talking of the "legendary years," but not offering much to show how and why the legend was formed. Nevertheless, it was good to see it given prime time, and our letters of thanks to the ABC for its inclusion in the schedule could perhaps bear fruit in further programs in the future.
Similarly, it's hoped many members have contacted Magic 693 Radio to compliment them on the 20-episode presentation of Gord Atkinson's "THE CROSBY YEARS."
Requests for a repeat might bring us a replay of the series at night, or on weekends, when many more listeners could appreciate it.

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To <u>PETER GREEN</u>, of Tasmania - special thanks for his donations of a variety of items for use as Film Night raffle prizes. Much appreciated!

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The Bingthings Society Magazine "BINGTALKS," has news on KATHRYN CROSBY. One report reveals that she is planning a trip to Northern Ireland in an attempt to trace Bing's path on his one trip to the province...in 1942, when entertaining American forces at Langford Lodge on the shore of Lough Neagh, and at other bases near Belfast and in County Antrim. As part of her trip, Kathryn has offered to help promote George O'Reilly's "Golden Olden Record Company's" release of the vintage Crosby CD, "A Little Bit of Irish."

The second, not-so-happy report, quotes journalist Paul Francis as revealing that Kathryn is being taken to court to explain how she's handling the "crooner's" $25 million fortune. A lawsuit filed by Bank of the West, which administers the money, charges she has failed in her duty - may have run up debts of "unknown magnitude" - and has ignored the bank's requests to examine the books. We're bound to hear more of this, hopefully with a minimum of unpleasantness.

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Harking back to our FILM NIGHTS, the Committee has a plea for your support. A lot of effort is put into organising what we hope are enjoyable and interesting programs, but attendance on the last two nights has been rather disappointing. So do please join fellow members in May, and on the ensuing dates listed elsewhere - your support is vital to the film functions, and in fact, to the survival of the Society.

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Gordon Onans of the International Sinatra Society, has extended an invitation for VBCS members to attend a special function, and has supplied the following details:- (OVER)

FRANK SINATRA SOCIAL NIGHT
WHEN: WEDNESDAY MAY 3RD, 1995 AT 7.45PM
WHERE: NORTH MELBOURNE SOCIAL CLUB
FOGARTY STREET, NORTH MELBOURNE

The Society of Singers Inc. Honoring Frank Sinatra 1991

The Society of Singers Inc. is a recently formed Society, established about 1990. To my best knowledge, its aims are to set up a benevolent fund to assist colleagues who may be in need or in ill-health. Its charter is ultimately to build a retirement home that singers could use, if need be, in their later years. It was also decided to introduce an annual award to be given to a particular singer chosen by members. The first recipient of that award was Ella Fitzgerald, and the award became known as the "Ella Award". These awards would be presented to recipients each year at a function organised for the occasion.

VIDEO: "THE SOCIETY OF SINGERS HONOURING FRANK SINATRA"

We are very fortunate to be seeing this memorable happening and our sincere thanks go to Committee member Ian Travis for allowing us the privilege of seeing this video. It has never been shown on television and was profesionally filmed by the Society of Singers for historical purposes only.

This is a nostalgic night, with so many great Big Band singers from the thirties and forties, along with a glittering host of entertainment celebrities all in one room to honor a national treasure, Frank Sinatra. So many of these singers pay tribute to Frank in song, and they still have that magic of so long ago. Frank does sing one song with Ella Fitzgerald and then he is free to relax and enjoy the evening which is in his honor, and he has a wonderful time.

If you enjoy this kind of music and this kind of singing, don't miss it, for you will never see and hear anything like it again.

To open the evening's entertainment, we have a rare 25-minute video, in black and white, of one of ten dramas made for "The Frank Sinatra Show" in 1957-58. The story is entitled *Take Me To Hollywood*, starring Frank Sinatra as a talent scout who falls in love with a movie starlet. This is a first showing of this mini-movie, filmed at the Goldwyn Studios on 13 December 1957.

Of course there will be the usual social supper break - the odd sandwich, cake or biscuit is appreciated. We supply the tea, coffee, etc., as well as three great prizes to be won for our 'Special Effort'.

We look forward to seeing you on **Wednesday May 3rd at 7.45**. *Note the change of night for this occasion.*

Why not bring a friend or another member of the family - the more the merrier!